

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8949

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S E C R E T SEOUL 1843

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS CINCPAC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, KS

SUBJECT: NEW ANTI-CRITIC BILL

REF: STATE 061195

1. CHARGE MADE APPROACH DISCUSSED REFTEL AFTERNOON MARCH 19. ACTING FONMIN LHO SHIN YONG TOOK CAREFUL NOTES, PARTICULARLY OF SUBSTANCE PARA 2 REFTEL. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION, LHO SAID ROKG HAD BEEN STUDYING MEASURE FOR SOME TIME AND HAD ANTICIPATED ADVERSE REACTION FROM USG AND ELEMENTS US SOCIETY CONCERNED WITH HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS. NEVERTHELESS, IN VIEW INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY WHICH ROKG DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION HAD BEEN RECEIVING, MUCH OF WHICH BASED ON FALSE AND MISLEADING INFORMATION, ROKG HAD DECIDED THAT SOME MEASURE WAS NECESSARY. HE GAVE LONG STANDARD ARGUMENT BASED ON NEED FOR NATIONAL UNITY AND DISCIPLINE IN FACE OF THREATS, BOTH SUBVERSIVE AND MILITARY, FROM NORTH KOREA.

2. IN RESPONSE TO QUERY, LHO SAID CHARGE COULD ASSURE DEPARTMENT THAT THERE NO INTENTION TO DENY FOREIGN EMBASSIES, NEWSMEN OR OFFICIAL VISITORS ACCESS TO ROKG'S POLITICAL OPPONENTS. INTENT WAS TO INHIBIT

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SUCH OPPONENTS FROM SEEKING INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY

FOR SLANDER AND DEFAMATION OF ROKG AND FALSE INFORMATION
ABOUT KOREAN SITUATION.

3. CHARGE SPOKE IN STRONG TERMS ABOUT NEGATIVE REACTION
THAT MEASURE WOULD AROUSE AMONG ALREADY ALIENATED
SEGMENTS OF CONGRESS AND US SOCIETY AND DAMAGE IT
WOULD DO TO ROKG'S ALREADY TARNISHED IMAGE IN
GENERAL AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS. CHARGE
SUGGESTED THAT ROKG GIVE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO
ACTION IT MIGHT TAKE SHOULD FOREIGN NEWSMEN OR
DETERMINED ROKG OPPONENTS DECIDE TO TEST ROKG'S
WILLINGNESS TO ENFORCE LAW. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT
CRITICS OF ROKG WOULD BE SENSITIVE, BECAUSE OF PAST
EXPERIENCE TO ANY INDICATION OF ROKG INTENTION
TO ENFORCE MEASURE AGAINST KOREAN NATIONALS OVERSEAS.

4. CONTRARY TO INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM OTHER
SOURCES, LHO SAID HE DID NOT EXPECT MEASURE WOULD
BE PASSED BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MARCH 19. IN ANY
EVENT, HE SAID SUBSTANCE CHARGE'S APPROACH WOULD
BE CONVEYED TO HIGHER AUTHORITIES.

ERICSON

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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